

Last week marked an important milestone in the war on terrorism for our country. Osama bin Laden applauded the 9/11 attacks. Such deliberate killing of innocent lives deserved retaliation. It is good that bin Laden is dead and justice is served. The way in which he was finally captured and killed shows that targeted retribution is far superior to wars of aggression and nation-building. In 2001 I supported giving the president the authority to pursue those responsible for the vicious 9/11 attacks. However, misusing that authority to pursue nation-building and remaking the Middle East was cynical and dangerous, as the past ten years have proven.

It is tragic that it took ten years, trillions of dollars, tens of thousands of American casualties and many thousands of innocent lives to achieve our mission of killing one evil person. A narrow, targeted mission under these circumstances was far superior to initiating wars against countries not involved in the 9/11 attacks, and that is all we should have done. This was the reason I emphasized at the time the principle of Marque and Reprisal, permitted to us by the US Constitution for difficult missions such as we faced. I am convinced that this approach would have achieved our goal much sooner and much cheaper.

The elimination of Osama bin Laden should now prompt us to declare victory and bring our troops home from Afghanistan and Iraq. Al Qaeda was never in Iraq and we were supposedly in Afghanistan to get Osama bin Laden. With bin Laden gone, there is no reason for our presence in the region – unless indeed it was all about oil, nation-building, and remaking the Middle East and Central Asia.

Hopefully bin Laden does not get the last laugh. He claimed the 9/11 attacks were designed to get the US to spread its military dangerously and excessively throughout the Middle East, bankrupting us through excessive military spending as he did the Soviets, and to cause political dissension within the United States. Some 70 percent of Americans now believe we should leave Afghanistan yet both parties seem determined to stay. The best thing we could do right now is prove bin Laden a false prophet by coming home and ending this madness on a high note.

Tragically, one result may be the acceptance of torture as a legitimate tool for pursuing our foreign policy. A free society, calling itself a republic, grounded in the rule of law, should never succumb to such evil.

At the very least we should all be able to agree that foreign aid to Pakistan needs to end immediately. The idea that bin Laden was safely protected for ten years in Pakistan, either willfully or through incompetence, should make us question the wisdom of robbing American citizens to support any government around the world with foreign aid. All foreign aid and intervention needs to end.

Our failed foreign policy is reflected in our bizarre relationship with Pakistan. We bomb them with drones, causing hundreds of civilian casualties, we give them billions of dollars in foreign aid for the privilege to do so, all while they protect America's enemy number one for a decade.

It is time to consider a sensible non-interventionist foreign policy as advised by our Founders and authorized by our Constitution. We would all be better off for it.